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INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT

ILLUSTRATED BY J.G. CHAPMAN

THE WATER PITCHER.

"There was no person there but a delicate young girl."—Page 18.

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Mr. Albert Frank was a very worthy man, and had the highest character among his fellow citizens for honesty, prudence, and high principle. In all his business he was a model of order and punctuality; but in his habits and the general tenor of his life, he was an oddity. He still dressed in the

fashion of the last century. On Sundays his usual dress was a large, round, unpowdered wig, a neckcloth of the finest white linen, a frock of cinnamon brown, cut in the old fashion, with large buttons covered with gold lace. The same taste was visible in his house. The furniture of the chambers, the tapestry, the frames of the pictures and mirrors, tables, chairs and sideboard, were all of costly material, but entirely of the old fashion. The writing-desk of walnut, with its old drawers, was the very one which had been used by his grandfather, and the cumbrous arm-chair still held the place it had held three generations before.

The habits of the family were also in accordance with old custom. They rose early and were in bed early. No candle was ever used in the house of a summer evening, nothing but the lamp in the hall

which was kept up during the night. Though Mr. Frank was the richest merchant in the town, he would gather up bits of thread and pieces of torn paper in his counting-house, because, as he used to say, they could be of some use. He thought that his mercantile correspondents used entirely too much sealing-wax, a custom which he severely censured, not merely for the large annual outlay in the purchase of the article, but also for the heavy additional postage on the overloaded letters. He also severely reproved the servants if the lamp in the hall were not extinguished the moment it was clear day. No wonder, then, that he was looked on as parsimonious, and narrow-hearted; and that many who applied to him for relief and got a severe lecture on economy and industry, called him a miser. Still there were others who applied more than

once, and received such liberal assistance, that they were surprised at his generosity, and gave him a very different character.

His son, Mr. Frederick Frank, a fine handsome young man, had just returned from England, where he had been for some time. He was dressed in the first fashion, and people said that he and his father would assuredly fall out. But to their great surprise, the father not only had no objection to his son's taste, but on the contrary, heartily approved it. The first commercial families in the city would be happy to have young Frederick as their son-in-law, but the common report was that the only son of old Mr. Frank and the only daughter of the rich Mr. Sax would be an excellent match. The two fathers had always been on excellent terms; Mr. Sax was, after Mr. Frank, the richest man in the city, and the young

lady was beautiful, talented, and highly accomplished, so that the union was regarded as certain. Frederick, it was said, paid more attention to the young lady than to any other in the town, and the father also, it was believed, was favorably inclined. But suddenly the friendly intercourse of the families was interrupted, and all rumors of the marriage ceased. People were utterly at a loss to know the cause. "No doubt," said they, "it must be some oddity of that singular old Frank."

The report soon went out, that young Frederick had given his affections to a young lady, who, even her enemies were compelled to admit, was beautiful and virtuous, but who had not a hundred florins fortune. "Impossible," was the general cry, "impossible, the father will never tolerate such a marriage." The whole

town laughed at the rumor, until it was positively announced that Mr. Frederick Frank and Miss Wilhelmina Grünheim were really to be married on a certain day. Nothing could exceed the astonishment of the whole town at this unexpected news.

The old gentleman very seldom saw large companies, or was a guest at public entertainments. He could not endure these boisterous meetings and fatiguing pleasures, which were kept up till a late hour of the night. Every person was sure that the wedding would be very private. But far from it; old Mr. Frank invited all his respectable townsmen, and all those with whom he had any connection. All joyfully accepted the invitation—all except Mr. Sax, his wife and daughter, who left the town a few days before.

The guests all expected a marriage party in the old style. "No doubt," said they, "we shall all be ranged in the old hall, with its old-fashioned decorations of fifty years' standing." But judge of their surprise when, on entering, they found the hall, in which a banquet had not been given for many long years, freshly painted and decorated in most gorgeous style. Nothing was old but the wine, with the plain crystal old-fashioned glasses. The milk-white table linen, the richest produce of the Flemish looms, was covered with the most costly articles of English manufacture, and the silver plate was in the latest fashion, with all which old Frank, despite the simplicity of his taste, appeared highly pleased.

Indeed, during the whole evening he was the very picture of happiness. His oldest friends never saw him so happy

and cordial even in the hey-day of his youth.

Still some of the guests were heard to whisper, "Old men do foolish things. The settlement that his son is getting is not worth all this extraordinary expenditure. The bride has no money; her very dress and those rich jewels in her hair were given by the old man. The strange old fellow has disappointed us all."

Dinner was served up at a late hour in the evening. The crystal lustre over the table was lighted up, and in the gleam of its innumerable wax lights, the rich silver plate sparkled with a brilliancy that dazzled the beholders. The dessert, of the rarest confectionary and richest fruits, and all that wealth could command, was over; the Rhenish wine and glasses had been brought in by two servants on costly salvers—when lo, the old man himself arose, left the hall,

and in a few minutes returned with a large common dark green earthen pitcher, and with his own hands placed it on the table, directly under the gleaming lustre. All eyes were riveted on this strange object. The pitcher was, certainly, elegantly decorated with fresh wreaths of the most beautiful flowers—still it made a very poor figure among the surrounding splendor. "I knew well things could not pass over without some oddity," said a fat old gentleman, who had already tested the flavor of the wines. The remark was overheard by the company, and, notwithstanding all their efforts, there was a loud and general laugh.

"Welcome to your amusement, ladies and gentlemen," said old Frank; "I cannot blame you. You have good reason to laugh. An earthen pitcher on the festive board is a mystery. You see it is a plain earthen pitcher. But it is full of the best

Rhenish wine, twenty years old—and this old wine shall this day honor the happiest family feast that I, an old man, have ever witnessed. But however highly I value the wine, I do not value it half so much as that old pitcher. It was the pitcher that gave occasion to this festive party; yes, were it not for it, this wedding would never have taken place. Am I wrong, then, in filling it with the best wine I had in my cellar, and in making it the crown of my festive board?"

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG WATER-CARRIER.

THE curiosity of the guests was wound up to the highest pitch, and all earnestly entreated Mr. Frank to give them a full history of the pitcher. Mr. Frank at once complied.

"One evening, last August, I was returning home from my garden. I had just been pulling the last apples from the trees that I had planted myself, and so happy did I feel at my work, that I paid no attention to the lateness of the hour, and the large dense masses of dark clouds that were gathering in the heavens. A very violent rain, accompanied with a cold and violent

wind, overtook me before I reached the entrance of the town. I wrapped myself closely in my mantle, and arrived at the main street in the suburbs, near the well, where the stone lion discharges the water from his open jaws, as if he would swallow up all the little girls that go to the spring. There was no person there but a delicate young girl, about sixteen years old, who was very neatly and elegantly dressed, but whom, lest I might offend her modesty," said he, with a smile and an affectionate look at the blooming bride, "I cannot name. That earthen pitcher, which stands there now with its wedding wreaths, was under the fountain, which, notwithstanding all the majesty of the lion, flowed very tediously. The young girl, fair and blooming as innocence itself, and mild and gentle as patience, waited very composedly until the pitcher was filled. She had gathered

a white handkerchief around her head, to protect herself from the rain. Still she was shivering with the cold. I could not look upon the angelic countenance of the good child, without the liveliest emotions of compassion.

"'Good evening, my dear child,' said I, in a friendly tone. 'You have not been in the habit of coming for water to this well.'

"She blushed slightly, and made no answer, but intimated by a gentle nod that my suspicions were correct.

"'That pitcher is entirely too large and heavy for you,' I remarked.

"'Indeed, it is heavy enough,' she replied, with a gentle smile.

"'Perhaps it is necessity that obliges you to labor,' I continued.

"'Ah,' said she, with a sigh, 'it is necessity, indeed.'

"'Tell me candidly,' said I, with some earnestness, 'can I do you any service?'

"'I don't know,' said she with a gentle voice—'perhaps you would be kind enough to place the pitcher on my head.'

"I did so. She thanked me as cordially as if she had received the greatest favor, and retired.

"It is too bad, thought I, that a lady should be reduced to the necessity of carrying water. She is certainly of respectable family, as is evident not only from her dress, but also from her genteel appearance, her elegant accent, and manners. She must have had a good education. Probably, as she comes at this late hour, she belongs to some reduced family, who are ashamed to make their poverty known. I must make all inquiries after her, and do something to relieve her.

"I watched the house where she en-

tered, and learned that it was occupied by a turner, and that in a small back apartment, there was a decent old person, a lodger. The turner had a large collection of articles ready for sale, and as I was taking my evening walk next day, I entered and inquired for some things which I wanted to purchase. The master brought me up to his ware-room with the greatest alacrity, and as I observed a great many doors, I remarked, 'You have a great deal of room here; I am sure you must be receiving a large sum from your lodgers.'

"'Ah,' said he, 'all these upper rooms are filled with chairs, tables, and other articles of my manufacture. But on the ground floor I have a nice little chamber, which will be free in a few days, and which I can let to you with pleasure. It is very neat, and has an agreeable view into the garden.'

"'I should be very glad,' said I, 'to have that chamber. Perhaps it would suit an old domestic of mine, whom I am anxious to provide for. Can I see it now?'

"'Oh, certainly,' said he; adding with heartless rudeness, 'The old tenant that has it now, is a very bad pay. If you pay me a small advance, the little room is at your service this moment.'

"This harshness disgusted me, but I said nothing. I went with him into the next room, and saw a large collection of really most valuable articles. I asked him the price of a writing-desk, and pushed so close a bargain with him, that he could have no profit: to accept his terms would have cost me only a few additional shillings; but I wished to punish him for his severity towards a poor, old person, plainly telling him, 'We must be

hard on hard people.' I knew by his look at the moment, that his heart said I was a miser.

"When we came down stairs, I asked him whether I could see the room. 'Perhaps,' said I, 'though the former bargain did not succeed, the second may.'

"He opened the door and introduced me. Old Martha, a decent looking old woman, was seated on her chair, spinning.

She burst into tears on hearing the cause of my visit.

"'Oh, now,' said I, 'don't cry. I will not dispossess you. To secure you in possession of this little place, I am ready to pay as much as your landlord can reasonably require. But he must engage not to disturb you during your life.'

"The bargain was closed at once; for I gave the man much more than he expected. I then told him, that I wished to have a few moments' private conversation with old Martha. He retired in excellent humor, but shook his head as he disappeared. 'No doubt,' he meant to say, 'old Frank is an oddity—at one time a miser—and in a few moments, a prodigal. No man can fathom him.'"

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD SERVANT-MAID.

"OLD Martha was overjoyed," continued Mr. Frank, "and would have kissed my hand, which I, of course, would not allow. I sat down on the only old chair in the room, and began to speak to her. In a corner of the room, on a bench, I saw the pitcher which I had seen at the well, and which you, my honored guests, have the happiness of seeing here to-day. 'That's a very large pitcher,' said I—'but housekeeping, no matter on how small a scale, cannot go on without much water. But is not the well very distant, and you do not

appear strong? How do you contrive to get water?'

"The old creature felt that she could repose confidence in me, though she now saw me for the first time. She commenced a long narrative, every word of which came from her heart; so that she was eloquence itself.

"'You see, my dear sir,' said she—'pardon me, I don't know by what title to address you—I am ready to give you a full history. I know you have a kind heart, and do not despise the poor. It is, alas! too true, I am very poor. But, praise be to God, I have not much reason to complain. An angel girl has taken me kindly under her care. I saw better days, when I was a servant-maid with Mrs. Grünheim of Hall-brunn. Her husband—God be merciful to him—was an amiable, good man, and his death was felt as a

general loss. If the people could, they would long since have raised him from the grave. For he was always ready to assist every one with his money and advice. He never received presents—his hand was always open to the needy. It was no wonder, then, that he died poor. I was present at his death—as were his wife and daughter—mercy, how time flies!—the child was then only eight years old—now she is a woman—the wife and daughter, I was saying, were both standing by the bedside. Oh, how the three of us wept—but he consoled us. He implored his wife, in the most moving strain, to place her trust in God, the protector of the widow and the orphan, who would never abandon her. He then pressed her hand in his own icy hands, and made her promise to bring up their only daughter in piety and virtue, to guard her against pride, vanity, and the

love of pleasure—to keep her always under her own care, and never to allow her to keep company with vain and silly girls. The good lady followed this advice to the letter, and is now reaping the reward of her fidelity.

"'He turned then with faltering voice to his daughter, and exhorted her to "love above all things God—her Father, who is in heaven—to embrace with her whole heart the laws of our Divine Redeemer—to read every day, at least, a few lines of Scripture or holy books—to be constant in her attendance at divine worship—to pray frequently, to honor her mother, to obey her, to confide in her motherly care, and never to keep any secret from her—never to tell her an untruth—but to support her always, and never abandon her in her old age." The child promised faithfully, while her tears fell fast on the cold hands of her

dying father—she has kept her promise faithfully—God bless her—a better child was never on this world.

"'My good master did not forget me. He spoke a few words to me, which I can never forget.

"'"Martha," said he, "you have been in the service of my parents, and have grown gray in the family. I hoped that we could keep you until the end of your days. But God has disposed otherwise. I cannot reward your fidelity. God will undoubtedly repay you here or hereafter.

"'"I have very little to bequeath to you," he continued, addressing us, 'but I leave you no debts. And among the little that I do leave, there is not one ill-gotten penny. God's blessing will be on you, you will prosper as well as if I had left you thousands. The prayer of the poor, their grateful 'God reward you,' must bring

down blessings on you." A few moments after, the good gentleman died—alas! only in his forty-second year. We were obliged to leave the house, and had very little property to depend on. The poor lady was so afflicted for the loss of her husband, that she fell dangerously ill, and her temporal affairs became more and more disordered. I saw clearly that she could not afford a servant-maid—though she was ashamed to tell me so. But, as I had a sister, who was ready to receive me, I went to her, and my good lady and her daughter came to Hall-brunn, and lived for several years in a little room not larger than this. Some time ago, she came to this town, and was able to get an unfurnished chamber, with one bedroom and a little kitchen, in the fourth story of a large deserted house. She expected to be able to support herself here by her own labor,

as she had done in the village. The moment that Wilhelmina, or as we call her now, Mina, arrived here she discovered where I was. My sister had already died in great distress, and I had hired this little place for myself. I could not tell how happy I was on meeting my young mistress. She kissed her poor old servant, and we both wept with joy. From that moment she has done more for me than I can tell you. I have on Sundays and holidays, a share of the best that their own poor table affords. Yes, and could you believe it, ever since I lost the use of my limbs, she comes daily and brings me water from the well, in that very pitcher. She bought it out of her money, because she could not manage a water tub. God will repay her—he repays even a cup of cold water given in his name; a thousand times, I tell her, God will repay her.

Hitherto, indeed, she has nothing but sorrows. Her dear mother has been ill for some time past, and poor Mina has no person to help her now. She is very expert, but the best work brings but small profits. She has, also, great taste for embroidery. See there, in that old prayer book, over the pitcher, a little pious picture, which she decorated with her own hands, when she was a mere child, shortly after her father's death. She made me a present of it. It represents a green grave covered with a black cross, under the drooping boughs and yellow leaves of a weeping willow. Whenever I look on that picture, the tears start to my eyes, for the death of the good father, whom the poor child lost so soon. I weep, too, to think that such delicate hands should, from love for me, carry that load of a pitcher. The good God will reward the child.'

"Such was the faithful old servant's narrative.

"I took the old prayer-book, which appeared to serve as a cover for the pitcher, and examined the picture. It pleased me much. 'Is it not beautiful?' said Martha. 'I know well that it pleases you.'

"Now," said Mr. Frank, addressing his guests, "my dear friends, you must pardon me for giving this long story of the poor servant. The way she expressed herself—her manner—is not, perhaps, to your taste; but the matter is good—something the same as the pitcher on the table. I think no one here objects to the Rhenish wine, because it is served in a pitcher. No, no—no person is such a fool. How then could I suspect any of you of the much greater folly of disrelishing truth, because it comes from an humble source, and without any artful pomp or glitter of words.

CHAPTER IV.

WILHELMINA.

"I REMAINED for a considerable time," continued Mr. Frank, "in Martha's room, in the hope of seeing my dear daughter-in-law; as the hour for bringing the water was near. She did come at last, and was greatly surprised on seeing me. Martha began at once to extol me. 'Dear Mina,' said she, 'I cannot contain my joy. I must tell you the good news—the weight that pressed so heavily on me, is removed from my heart. I always feared,' said she, turning to me, that I should, some day or other, be obliged to leave my little room. My landlord was not satisfied with his rent, and

was constantly seeking more and more every quarter. He threatened to dispossess me, and I scraped together as much as I could from my poor earnings. Mina paid twice for me; but we could pay no more. We reckoned and planned, but there was no chance of success for us, when God sent you here to put an end to our trouble. Dearest Mina,' said she, 'this good gentleman is ready to make up the sum I want, and I shall no longer be under the necessity of taking the money which you so often earned for me, by hard work till midnight.'

"Mina stood there, blushing at these praises; she was the very image of amiable modesty, but I wished to put her virtue to a severe test, in order to know whether it was pure gold—merchants, you know, are exact. 'No doubt, my child,' said I to her, 'it is very generous in you to assist old

Martha in this way, and I commend you for it. But you carry your kindness too far. Is it not too much to bring water from the well to a poor old servant-maid? Can you deny it?'

"But Mina stared at me in amazement, and with a gentle nod, answered, 'O, Mr. Frank, the proof you have just given of your generous and tender feelings, shows that you cannot be serious in what you say.'

"'In solemn earnestness,' said I, 'a huge, shapeless pitcher, is a very strange object on the head of a young, handsome, and well-dressed lady. You are the laughing stock of the town. To carry water is not fit occupation for you.'

"'I think,' answered Mina, 'that to help a good person in need, can never be unbecoming. Can it ever be unbecoming to do good? Certainly, Mr. Frank, if you

thought so, you would not have had the kindness to raise the pitcher on my head, yesterday, at the well. You would have said, 'Oh, that's not fit work for a respectable citizen—let other people do it.'

"'Oh,' said I, 'that was a trifle not worth talking about. It was no more, if you will, than a little civility, which an old man might well pay to a young lady. But to draw water every day—so far—through frost and rain, and all sorts of bad weather, is no trifle. No, no—to become the servant of a servant-maid, is carrying kindness too far. There would be no end to the calls for your services, if you were willing to carry water for all that may require it.'

"'No doubt,' said Mina, smiling, 'the most generous good-will could not accomplish that. But that I should walk a few steps for my good old servant Martha, is, in my eyes, not an act merely of civility,

but a sacred duty. What feelings would I have, if I refused to do it? You cannot conceive what unspeakable services the good Martha—poor though she now is—has done to me and my mother, and what a noble and affectionate heart throbs under those rags. She scarcely could be called our servant—her dispositions made her a friend—a second mother to me. As far as I can remember—yes, farther—even from my very birth—she has had the care of me. How many long days has she carried me in her arms? How many sleepless nights has she spent at my bedside, to relieve my mother, who placed the most boundless confidence in her. How many thousand walks has she taken on my account? What has she not endured for me, while I suffered the infirmities of childhood? She often spared, from her own hard earnings, what might purchase a pre-

sent for me on my birthday. She assisted my parents in educating me. She told me little stories a thousand times, and always told them to instruct me. How earnestly has she warned me against evil, and taught me to fly, with horror, the least appearance of sin; and pictured the beauty of filial piety—of innocence, and modesty, and integrity, in the highest colors, to my youthful mind. But who can tell what she did during my father's long illness? her sleepless nights—her sympathy in our sorrows—her carelessness of her own comforts, in order to spare expense; as she knew that we had but little, and that my father's long illness entailed many heavy charges. And then, of the paltry sum that was due her when she left us, she did not receive even one penny. I could have no feeling, were I so ungrateful as to refuse walking a few steps for so kind a friend. It is no trouble to

me. I lose nothing by it. I have always a half-hour at my disposal before sunset, and, as my occupations keep me at home all day, an evening walk is good for my health. It is recreation to me. No doubt it may appear somewhat strange, that a person dressed as I am should be seen drawing water. I thought so myself, the first time I ventured into the street with my pitcher. I blushed when I met my acquaintances. I was obliged to bear a great many railleries, and it was to escape them that I usually went out only in the dusk of evening. But what, thought I to myself,—what harm can it do to a person to be laughed at for doing a good act? Still, to be very candid with you, were it possible to manage otherwise, I would much prefer not to carry the water. But the people of the house, here, will not do the least good service to poor Martha. We

found, here in the neighborhood, a young girl, who engaged to bring the water, and do other little turns for her, on the promise of receiving a dollar every quarter from my mother. But the girl was careless. Sometimes she was late, and sometimes she forgot it altogether. Just imagine to yourself, then, what must have been the condition of poor Martha—left so long without as much water as would prepare her soup, or even quench her thirst. Away, said I at last, with false shame. They who do good, need fear no shame. Moreover, there is a satisfaction in doing personally what we are personally interested in. And, besides,—but I have said too much already; so good evening to you,' said she, taking up the pitcher.

"'O,' said Martha, 'tell the rest now. Your mother gives you the dollar, and you give it to me. It enables me to have a

good bowl of warm milk every morning for breakfast. In truth, my dear Mina, not only for that, but for a thousand other things, I am under a debt of gratitude to you, which I cannot fully express. No matter how long I may live, I never can repay you.'

"'Be silent, my dear Martha,' said Mina, 'you have paid that debt long ago. My only wish is that I could do more for you, and that our new lodgings were not so confined, and up so many flights of stairs, as to prevent us from bringing you to live with ourselves—we are somewhat better attended where we live.' The good child wept as she said these words, and taking up her pitcher, turned and quickly disappeared.

"I now returned home," said Mr. Frank to his guests, "and on my way my thoughts were completely absorbed in the scene I

had just witnessed. The conduct of this young girl, thought I, trifling though it may appear to many, appears to me the most noble that I have ever heard of in the course of my life. I know not which to admire most—her gratitude to an old servant, whose claims were no way extraordinary—the modesty of the noble girl—the calm superiority to the world's thoughts and concerns, so unusual in a person of her age—or the industry with which she toiled for the support of her mother. I resolved to become acquainted with the mother of so good a child. I resolved to go see her, and to give her some assistance. I went to purchase some embroidery, and found the mother just what you might expect from the conduct of the daughter. I was struck with the neatness and order visible in her poor apartments. There was not one atom of dust—all, all was just such as

pleased me. I requested to see some specimens of the embroidered work, and was charmed with their elegance. From that moment, Mina was constantly employed by me. I know well that I am reputed by some to be enormously rich, and by others to be a very great miser; but the terms I made with Mina were not such as might be expected from a merchant who was either one or the other."

CHAPTER V.

MISS SAX.

"AFTER some time," continued old Mr. Frank, "my son Frederick returned from England—and God be praised—to the great delight of his father; for during his absence he had wonderfully improved. I have no difficulty in telling him now, on his wedding day, that he fully realized—yes—surpassed my fondest anticipations. In a short time the whole city, though certainly without the consent of me or my son, had arranged a match between young Mr. Frank and Miss Sax. It was to have been a great festival for the whole town. The two families, Sax and Frank, are the

richest amongst us; the two children are the sole heirs of the family properties, and nothing is wanted, said the general report, to bring the business to a conclusion, but two enormous sums of money. As our gardens lay close to each other, it sometimes happened that both families met and walked together after dinner. My son walked with Madam and Miss Sax, while Mr. Sax and I followed in the rear. This circumstance removed all doubt from people's minds. The marriage was universally considered to be definitely settled.

"One evening, about nightfall, we were all returning home together. Mina, carrying her pitcher, met us. She appeared disconcerted, made way for us in the narrow passage, and stood there, modest and trembling, with her heavy load on her head. 'Good evening, Miss Mina,' said I, in a friendly tone. A loud laugh from

Miss Sax! This ruffled my temper. 'Miss Sax, why do you laugh,' said I, 'is it at me, or the young woman?' 'O! Mr. Frank,' said she, 'not at you, but at the young water-lady.' 'Why do you call the good child a water-lady?' I asked in such a tone as not to let her see that the expression displeased me. 'Oh,' she answered, with a smile, 'I think a young lady with a pitcher of water on her head, rather a strange sight. A pitcher of water and a lady are rather an odd association. The dress she wears, is worn only by respectable people—the business she is engaged in, is done by servants. I cannot but laugh when I see beggary and respectability so oddly associated.' 'But,' said I, 'I have the very best reasons to know, that she is carrying the water, not for herself, but for a poor, old, helpless woman, who was once in her service.' 'If so,'

answered Miss Sax, 'she must be a very simple soul, and her simplicity has duped her into a very strange impropriety. For a thousand ducats I would not be seen in her dress, going through the streets with a pitcher of water on my head, in danger of meeting, at every step, people of respectability. Let servants get their wages —that is enough for them—you are under no farther obligation to them—all their claims are settled.' She would have chattered more, but I saw the mother giving her a wink to be silent. A dress-maker happening to pass by at the moment, with a large parcel under her arm, Miss Sax suddenly broke off the conversation, saluted the dress-maker most familiarly, and begged to know to what lady she was bringing the bonnet she had in her parcel.

"This little adventure had very con-

siderable influence on me. I do not deny that I had some notion of having my son married to Miss Sax. Still I had many misgivings on the matter. I could not form a fixed opinion on her character. But I had now got such a view of her disposition, that I was convinced she and I could never agree. That whole evening, Mina was constantly before my eyes. I saw her standing there, so virtuous, so modest, so talented, standing with her pitcher on her head, and giving no other answer to the haughty look, and coarse laughter, and cutting railleries of Miss Sax, than by turning her eyes with more gentleness and modesty to the ground.

"I candidly acknowledge," continued Mr. Frank, "that I began to think a young woman like Mina, would be a most desirable daughter-in-law. Such a noble heart, thought I, is worth a ton of gold—

and no amount of gold can supply the want of a noble heart. If Mina were so kind to an old servant-maid, who could be unhappy with her? But I kept my thoughts to myself—I resolved that my son's choice should be free."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUITOR.

"THAT evening, when we came home," said Mr. Frank, "my son was pensive. When we were at supper, he asked me, who was that young woman, whom he had seen now for the first time. He begged me to tell him the whole history of that water pitcher, with which I appeared to be so well acquainted. I did so, in the same simple strain in which I have now

told it to you, without making any remark, but, I was happy to see, not without making a very visible impression on my son.

"After some time, I perceived that something was depressing my son's spirits. I implored him one morning at breakfast to place confidence in his father, and not conceal his secret, whatever it was. He began—but with very evident symptoms of embarrassment and alarm, to tell me the high opinion he had of Mina—and to give hints of his hopes and fears. 'Do you know,' said I, 'that she has no money?' 'Perfectly well,' he answered, firmly, 'but it is not money I want.' 'And how is Mina disposed towards you?' 'Precisely,' said he, 'as I am towards her.' 'You must have had some mutual declaration then,' said I. 'Never,' he answered, 'not one word on any such attachment, not a syllable about marriage ever passed

our lips; how could I, without the consent of the best of fathers, speak of marriage or of an attachment to any person, until I had reason to hope that a marriage would take place?' 'But are you certain,' said I, 'that Mina is sincerely attached to you, and that she, a poor girl, is not looking perhaps for your riches.' 'Impossible,' said Frederick, 'such intentions are utterly incompatible with her character. I am convinced she can have no such intentions.'

"He then began to tell me, very eloquently, that Mina's virtues were of more value than all the gold in the world. 'Frederick,' said I, interrupting him, 'what reason have I ever given you to imagine that your father prized money more than virtue?—come—come to my arms, and receive the assurance of my most hearty approbation of your choice. In small matters, I have certainly been

careful about money—but it was in order that you need not look for it in the most important affair of your life. I am delighted with your choice—it is in perfect accordance with my wishes—the fondest wishes of a father's heart. And now, with your leave, you must allow me to be your suitor with Mina's mother. You may follow in half-an-hour's time.'

"I ran—and it was, certainly, no easy matter—I ran up the four flights of stairs, to the little room of the excellent widow. Mina was sewing—seated in her usual place. She was a little disconcerted when she saw me. The good mother, too, appeared surprised at such an early visit, and at so unusual an hour. I told my business at once—and marked, with inexpressible delight, the joyful amazement of the affectionate mother, and of the young woman herself—who, certainly, had no hope of

any such proposal. 'Are you aware,' said the mother, 'that I have nothing—absolutely nothing, to give with my daughter?' 'Let not that cost you one thought,' said I, 'Mina is as rich as a king's daughter—rich in the noblest property—piety and virtue. I don't want money. No rich lady for me—I want a good daughter-in-law; and if you and your daughter consent, I am the happiest father-in-law on earth. I must insist, moreover, that you do not give your daughter the value of one penny in money—nothing but one article of household furniture—I mean the big water pitcher in which Wilhelmina carried the water every day to the old servant-maid. I firmly believe that water pitcher will bring more luck into my house than if it were full of gold coin.' Before the mother had time to answer, my son entered. She and I then joined the hands of our chil-

dren, and wept as we blessed them. It was a happy, blissful moment, of the purest and most unclouded joy.

"We kept the matter a profound secret. My son was obliged to take a long journey. In the mean time I had my house newly painted, and all my silver plate recast in the newest fashion. I did so, partly to give some employment to our tradesmen, who then had not much work, and partly to do all in my power to celebrate with suitable pomp the present happy day. This festival is above all, and I thought I could not do too much to honor it."

CHAPTER VII.

NOBLE CONDUCT OF THE YOUNG COUPLE.

"SUCH, my worthy friends," said old Mr. Frank, closing his narrative, "is the history of THE WATER PITCHER, and I am sure you are not surprised that I have given it the place of honor here to-day. It had, as you have seen, a very considerable part in bringing about this union. The clumsy, old pitcher, served as a matchmaker, though it was as unconscious of its influence, as the modest, gentle bride, when she carried it through the streets, in the discharge of a sacred duty to her old servant. Let it, then, wear its garlands, and hold its place of honor. It has won them well, and done more good

in the world than many a fat gentleman, though he may have drank perhaps ten times more wine than the pitcher ever brought water from the well.

"Permit me," said he, "to add a few words to my narrative. This water pitcher proves to us all that those whom God has blessed with no wealth—those who have no money—can yet do many charitable acts. Charity of this kind is most agreeable to God, and brings down on the poor greater blessings than gold. This pitcher ought to be preserved as a family monument; and, in a hundred years hence, the children of the house cannot look upon it without reverencing and blessing the memory of their grandmother. I wish that every young woman, be she rich or poor—be her settlement in life high or low—could present some such simple article to her future husband—suppose a

little basket, in which she had from time to time, brought bread, or eggs, or butter, to the poor; or a little earthen plate, on which she had laid aside at every meal some broth, or nourishment of some kind, for a sick person; or a work-basket, in which she had put up every day, were it only for a few moments, some sewing or other work to clothe the poor. Unpretending articles of this kind would not, it is true, make such a figure as many costly presents, but they would be the most valuable treasure in the house. No doubt, costly articles of silver plate are a valuable capital, which can be turned to good account should necessity require—but in those little articles I have mentioned, there would be a still more valuable capital, payable in the other world."

"Bravo," exclaimed the fat gentleman at the foot of the table, who from time to

time had cast many a wishful glance at the pitcher—"Bravo, my dear Mr. Frank, you have spoken most eloquently. But for the present, we have heard enough of the pitcher. Let us now test the flavor of the noble beverage it contains. The good wine smells sweeter even than those flowers that crown the pitcher. The flavor tells upon me—here at the foot of the table."

Whilst the fat old gentleman was speaking, the bride whispered something into the ear of old Frank, who immediately told the company. "I promised the bride not to refuse any request she should make this day. But since the request she has made now, is one which I cannot grant without the consent of my honored guests, I take the liberty of submitting the matter to your consideration. The bride was most anxious to have her old

friend Martha, to whom she owes many of her good qualities, present here at table, and she begged me to send her an invitation. I went in person, and invited her. She was so ill that she could not come, and I must declare, that her absence is a considerable abatement of the happiness of the evening. It was, therefore, resolved that we should send her a portion of all that was provided for our guests. But now the bride comes with another request. Martha has been ordered by the physicians to get some good old wine. The bride thinks that if the poor sufferer were to take only the same small quantity daily which she used to take in her former sickness, this full pitcher would serve her for a whole year, and perhaps keep her alive for ten years to come. I would not have communicated this request to the company, but would have taken the very simple and

obvious course of exhausting the pitcher here in honor of the bridegroom and bride, and then sending it replenished to old Martha. But, to be plain with you, I cannot do that; for I have not another drop of wine so good as this: I have long kept it in reserve, especially for this very occasion. My little cask precisely filled the pitcher. There it is before you; you have a right to it—there is no question of that. Still, I venture to propose to you, to take the votes of the company—'whether we shall drain the pitcher here in honor of the bride and bridegroom, or content ourselves with the wine which we have now, and some other which is coming, and which is very good, and comply with the wish of the bride, by devoting the wine to a work of mercy.' The majority of votes decides."

"Wha—wha—what!" stammered out

the fat gentleman at the foot of the table, who would have brought up the rear of the dissentients. He coughed and hemmed, and was preparing to make a long speech on the matter, but was received with an universal burst of merriment. The bride's wish was granted by acclamation, and the wine voted to old Martha with unanimous and hearty consent. The fat gentleman was the only dissentient, and he looked so sadly disappointed that the company could not refrain from laughing heartily at his expense. He muttered and grumbled, "I knew well the old man could not do even one sensible act. He was, and is a ———." He muttered the last word so thickly, that even the person by his side could not hear it.

The burgomaster, who came dressed in his robes of state to honor the festival, sat in one of the highest seats, near the mother

of the bride. He overheard some of the words of the fat man, and remarked, "I have often heard it said that Mr. Frank was a singular man; that it was hard to know what sort of person he was, and that he himself did not well know his own wishes. But I never heard such remarks from sensible people. Mr. Frank knows perfectly well, what he is doing. I could never see in his conduct, any of those imaginary eccentricities. He retained, for instance, the old fashion, both in dress and in the furniture of his house; but by this adherence to good old customs, and to his abhorrence of ever-changing and expensive fashions, he has amassed the greater part of his large fortune. He was sparing in small things, that he might be liberal on a splendid scale, to his fellow-men. He often managed matters in such a way, that those who were unacquainted with his motives,

censured him severely. But he not only gave himself no concern about what people thought of him, but even appeared to take a delight in being misunderstood. But the truth came out in the end. This was exactly the case with the pitcher. For my part, I could not guess what brought it here. I saw the bride blush, the bridegroom's eye beaming with joy, the bride's mother raising her eyes gracefully to heaven, and not a few of the guests almost inclined to laugh. But what a delightful and instructive explanation of his conduct have we not received from Mr. Frank? We are charmed with the story of the water pitcher. All of us, heartily approve the charitable use to which the good old wine is destined.

"I cannot refrain," continued he, "from adding another brief, but not unimportant observation. When a man of whose dis-

cernment and prudence we have a good opinion does an act that appears strange to us, we must not at once conclude that he is acting imprudently or wrong. We ought to suspend our judgments; time will tell whether he was right or wrong. We should observe the same course with regard to such men, that religion teaches us to hold with regard to many things that God does or permits to happen. At first, his ways are often utterly unintelligible to us; but in the end, we find that they were just and good. It were well that we could always follow this rule—never to prejudge the conduct of a good and prudent man, and much less the ways of a most wise and bounteous God."

The burgomaster then raising his glass, amid the plaudits of the whole party, drank to the health of Mr. Frank, the bride and bridegroom, the bride's mother, and all the

guests; and thus closed as happy a wed ding feast as ever had been celebrated.

When the company had retired, the bride took the pitcher, and gently addressing her husband, "Many a time," said she, "I brought this pitcher, full of water, to

my old friend; would it not be a good thing if I brought it to her this evening, for the last time, with the wine?" The husband took his hat at once, to accompany her. The bride's mother suggested that it

would be better to run the wine in bottles. "No, no," said old Mr. Frank, "the pitcher will be more welcome to old Martha. But I will send a servant with bottles to have the wine bottled and sealed in presence of the young couple."

The bride and bridegroom then walked by the light of the moon through the streets of the town. Oh, what a transport of joy was it not to the good old servant, now in her eightieth year, when she saw the young pair in their bridal dress enter her humble abode! When she saw the pitcher with its gorgeous wreaths, and heard the whole story, and tasted the restoring beverage—the like of which had never passed her lips—big tears, bursting from her grateful heart, rolled down her face, as she raised to her lips the rich old wine, which shone in the crystal glass like transparent gold. "God reward you—God

reward you," she repeated again and again. "Truly," said she, in a calm and solemn tone, "truly, this marriage is not unlike that at which our Lord and Saviour was present. When bride and bridegroom celebrate their marriage-day, as you have done, it is an invitation to Him to be amongst you. For you, dear Mina, He has indeed changed the water into wine. For, when you came here to me so often with the pitcher of water, you never imagined that the good God would, one day, enable you to present it to me on your marriage day, full of this costly wine. This is the reward of your pious and prudent life. God will pour out greater blessings still on you and your husband, whose heart is so like your own. Yes, rich blessings are in store for you. And, even though severe trials should be sent to prove your virtue,—though you should be reduced to

beggary, and be obliged to use the water pitcher, yet the virtuous dispositions of your hearts would make that water as agreeable as the most costly wine."

As the bride and bridegroom were retiring from the house, they still heard the grateful exclamations, "God reward you —God reward you"—repeated by faithful old Martha.